

# Major Moves Help Desk

## Office of Governor Mitch Daniels

### Lawmakers Hope to Reach Compromise by End of the Week

By Theodore Kim  
Indianapolis Star

House and Senate negotiators today began discussing possible tweaks to Gov. Mitch Daniels' plan to lease the Indiana Toll Road.

The House and Senate have passed differing versions of legislation, House Bill 1008, that would allow the governor to ratify a Toll Road lease.

An overseas consortium has offered the state an immediate payment of \$3.85 billion for the right to take over Toll Road operations, maintenance and revenues for 75 years.

Lawmakers are trying to resolve differences in the two versions of the bill before the General Assembly adjourns on March 14. Rep. Randy L. Borrer, R-Fort Wayne and sponsor of House Bill 1008, said he hopes to finish the negotiations by week's end.

Points of contention in the bill include:

-- Leaders in both chambers want to establish a trust fund that would generate money for road construction

well after the lease payment is gone. How that trust fund might be arranged is in debate.

-- The governor has promised about one-third of the money from the consortium's \$3.85 billion payment to the seven counties straddling the Toll Road. The House and Senate have not agreed on how to split up that money among the counties.

-- Whether to reopen the route of the yet-to-be-built I-69 between Indianapolis and Bloomington. Senate GOP leaders say such a review will help the governor's plan gain sufficient legislative support. But other lawmakers say the move would delay the project's construction.

-- How best to provide relief for Toll Road motorists. The Senate wants to



Gov. Daniels speaks with an I-69 supporter during the Major Moves Rally.

Governor's Office Photo

offer those motorists a state income-tax credit, while the House has proposed a temporary freeze on toll rates.

#### Major Moves Supporters

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anorris@gov.in.gov

Learn More about Major Moves

[www.majormoves.in.gov](http://www.majormoves.in.gov)

#### Major Moves On-The-Air

Gov. Mitch Daniels discusses Major Moves directly with Hoosiers during a new :60 television commercial. In the spot, the Governor is seated in front of the original RV 1. Below is the text of the commercial that is currently airing in the South Bend media market.

Gov. Daniels: I spent two great years in that vehicle back there seeing every corner of our state, and listening to the dreams and the worries of Hoosiers.

We said if got the chance, we'd bring change and we have. We've stopped the red ink and we're cleaning up government in a hundred ways, but that's not the hard part. Rebuilding the Indiana economy and restoring hope for our young people will take years of new thinking and big actions.

Our Major Moves roads and jobs plan is as big as it gets. Thousands of jobs and huge leaps forward like US 31 hang in the balance.

I come from business not politics and I'm telling you, this is a great deal for our future.

Like it or not, we're in a tough worldwide competition. We can't hide from it and we can't wish it away. States where folks are too scared of change to try anything new will be left behind. We either tackle our problems or throw in the towel.

Indiana has everything it takes to win if we have the courage to take decisive actions like Major Moves.

### Evansville Courier & Press on I-69

March 6, 2006

The Indiana Senate has passed Gov. Mitch Daniels' sweeping highway construction plan, sending it to a House-Senate conference committee where differences, including those involving Interstate 69, must be ironed out.

Passage of this bill would bring Indiana \$3.85 billion for the construction of highways and bridges, and could fast-track the construction of I-69 between Evansville and Indianapolis.

The fast-track language was left out of the final Senate version, but Sen. Robert Meeks, R-LaGrange, the senate sponsor, has promised to reinsert the language during conference committee.

In addition, the Senate version tinkered with the I-69 route going into Indianapolis and could slow construction by several years. It needs to come out in conference committee. State Sen. Vaneta Becker, R-Evansville, had threatened to vote against the bill if the Senate version did not allow for fast-tracking and contained the route change. However, in the end she voted "yes" after conversations with Daniels and Senate leadership.

It was the right decision, even though the final vote in favor turned out to be 29-20. Had Becker voted no and the measure failed, that could have been the end of the highway bill and its \$3.85 billion statewide economic boost. And it could have been the end of I-69.

Becker told Jennifer Whitson of the Courier & Press Indianapolis bureau that she voted to keep the bill moving.

"I don't want to cut off the only opportunity we have to continue to work for I-69," Becker said in assessing the situation. It is unfortunate that Democratic lawmakers from Evansville have not championed the I-69 project during this debate, as Becker has. They stand with those opposed to the highway bill, and by implication, not in support of the fast-tracking of I-69. If Daniels' highway plan, which would fund highway and bridge projects all over the state, fails to gain a compromise and pass both houses again, I-69 would be in big trouble.

Indeed, if none of this comes about this year, and Indiana loses its \$3.85 billion offer from a Spanish-Australian consortium to operate the Indiana Toll Road, the state would be left to try to borrow money, just to do a fraction of the road work possible under the governor's plan. How do you think I-69 would fare in a statewide consideration of how to use limited funds for highway work?

Evansville Mayor Jonathan Weinzapfel, a Democrat, has it right. He drove to the highway rally in Indianapolis on Tuesday to lend his support to I-69.

"The bottom line is we want to see I-69 built - if that means as a private toll road, I'm willing to support that," the mayor said. Weinzapfel and Becker, apparently unlike the others, understand what is at stake here.